

JASON SMITH
8TH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

**COMMITTEE ON
THE JUDICIARY**

COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
THE INTERNET SUBCOMMITTEE

REGULATORY REFORM, COMMERCIAL
AND ANTITRUST LAW SUBCOMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION AND CIVIL JUSTICE
SUBCOMMITTEE

**COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES**

PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL
REGULATION SUBCOMMITTEE

FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS AND
INSULAR AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2508

May 8, 2014

Received & Inspected

MAY 13 2014

FCC Mail Room

492

2230 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4404-PHONE
(202) 226-6326-FAX

CAPE GIRARDEAU OFFICE
2502 TANNER DRIVE, SUITE 205
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO 63703
(573) 335-0101-PHONE

FARMINGTON OFFICE
22 E. COLUMBIA STREET
FARMINGTON, MO 63640
(573) 758-8755-PHONE

ROLLA OFFICE
830 A.S. BISHOP
ROLLA, MO 65401
(573) 384-2455-PHONE

WEST PLAINS OFFICE
35 COURT SQUARE, SUITE 300
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775
(417) 255-1515-PHONE

<http://www.jasonsmith.house.gov>

Hon. Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I'm writing to express my appreciation for recent activity at The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) concerning the provision of broadband to rural America. I am particularly encouraged by the portions of the Technology Transfer Order, released in January of this year, which included rural trials to deploy broadband by non-traditional providers.

As you may know, many of my constituents are at risk of being left on the wrong side of the Digital Divide. Without robust broadband, small towns are losing businesses and rural school children are lagging behind their urban peers and America is slowly but surely losing many of the rural places that enrich our national economy and culture.

Your agency's action in requesting expressions of interest to provide rural broadband by non-traditional recipients of Connect America Funds is an encouraging sign that you and your staff are exploring creative ways to address the broadband needs of rural America. I understand that over 1000 expressions of interest were filed for this program, including projects that would serve over 100 rural electric cooperative service territories. The low population numbers and sparse density of households make rural areas more difficult from both a business case standpoint and a service standpoint. Electric cooperatives have a long track record of providing affordable reliable utility service in challenging areas. In my district, I am pleased that SEMO Electric Cooperative filed an expression of interest. If funded this project would bring broadband service to 26,535 of my constituents.

Thank you in advance for your full and fair consideration of this application and I ask that you please keep me apprised of its progress. I encourage you to begin the rural broadband trials as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Jason Smith
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2014

The Honorable Jason Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2230 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding SEMO Electric Cooperative and its Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband deployment project. I appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In its unanimously adopted *Technology Transitions Order (Order)* in January, the Commission recognized that particular challenges exist for the deployment of next generation communications services in rural areas. In order to inform our policies on building next generation networks in rural America, the Commission invited proposals parties to submit expressions of interest to determine whether there is interest into constructing high bandwidth networks in rural, high-cost areas, including Tribal lands.

As you note, a diverse set of entities have filed nearly 1,000 expressions of interest, including rural telephone companies, electric co-ops, cable and wireless Internet service providers, schools and libraries, research and education networks, and rural communities. The proposals reflect the understanding that high bandwidth services are becoming increasingly important to the future of economic development, education, health care, government services, entertainment, information, communication and creativity.

The Commission currently is reviewing the expressions of interest that have been submitted, and we have sought public comment on a number of rural broadband experiment issues, including the size of the budget and selection criteria to be used in reviewing proposals. After completing a review of the submissions and the record in response to our *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, the Commission would adopt an Order setting a budget and establishing detailed selection criteria for rural broadband experiments. At that point, we would invite parties, such as SEMO Electric Cooperative, to submit formal proposals for consideration by Commission staff.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler